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Disgraced;

OR, THE

BROKEN SWORD.

THE
GREAT GERMAN WAR DRAMA,

DISGRACED;
OR, THE
BROKEN SWORD,

IN FIVE ACTS,

With new and beautiful Music, Songs, Choruses, Tableaux,
etc., etc.

BY

MAJ. J. BARTON,

AUTHOR OF

Harry Allen, the Union Spy. "*Ellen Douglas,*" "*Stratagem,*"
"*Rip Van Winkle,*" etc., etc.

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1815



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.



COUNT STRALENHEIM,	<i>Col. of the 65th</i>
PHILIP MEISSEN,	<i>Sergt. of the 65th</i>
ALBERT STRALENHEIM,	<i>Son of Count S</i>
FREDERICK WILLIAM,	<i>Emperor of Germany.</i>
PRINCE BISMARCK,	<i>Prime Minister.</i>
CAPTAIN WALLENSTEIN,	<i>Capt. of the 65th.</i>
LEON,	<i>Servant to Count Stralenheim</i>
HOMER,	<i>Page to the Emperor.</i>
OFFICERS OF THE GUARD,	
GENEVIEVE,	<i>Ward of Madam Meissen</i>
MADAM MEISSEN,	
LADY GERTRUDE,	<i>Wife of Count Stralenheim</i>
ERNESTINE,	<i>Eldest daughter of Count Stralenheim.</i>
CECELIA,	<i>Younger daughter of Count Stralenheim</i>
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.	
SOLDIERS, ETC., ETC.	
GERMAN.	
COSTUME:	<i>Dress of the period of 1872.</i>

TO THE PUBLIC



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DISGRACED OR THE BROKEN SWORD.



ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Interior of Madam Meissen's cottage, cupboard near*
—L. U. E. *Latticed door and window in Flat.—Stand, with work*
basket upon it.—Bird cage suspended in window.—Arm chair,
lounge and four chairs—Spinning wheel near open doorway.
Genevieve discovered spinning, and singing as curtain rises
Madam Meissens discovered in arm chair sleeping.

MUSIC.

GENEVIEVE'S SONG.

A maiden sat at her busy wheel,
Her heart was light and free,
And ever in cheerful song burst forth
Her bosom's harmless glee.
Her song was in mockery of love,
And often I heard her say,
The gathered rose, and the broken heart,
Had charmed but for a day, &c

I looked on the maiden's rosy cheek
And her eye so clear and bright,
And I sighed to think that the traitor love
Should conquer a heart so light
She thought not of future days of woe,
As she carolled in tones so gay,
That the gathered rose and the broken heart
Could charm but for a day, &c

Philip. (*Entering door in flût.*) Ah! my little rosebud, I've been listening to your beautiful song until I'm almost charmed.

Madam M. (*Awaking and rubbing her eyes.*) Why, Philip; you here? we didn't expect you *again* to-day.

Philip. Yes, yes sister; I had a little leisure, and thought both of you would be *so delighted* to see me. (*Philip drops coolly into the arm chair, and throws his sword on the floor.*)

MADAM M., *exits* L. H.

Philip. (*Ironically.*) How proud you have grown girl. GENEVIEVE, why do you despise me? because I am not rich, am nothing but a poor subaltern, and do not belong to the nobility.

Genevieve. Do *I* belong to the nobility?

Philip. Not yet, but hope soon to do so. Its *rather* singular girl. What a strange fancy your family have for the name of Stral-en-heim. Your mother allowed *her* vanity (*and perhaps her heart*) to be touched for a certain Captain Stral-en-heim, and now it's your time to be smitten with the name. I should advise you, my girl, to have a care least *your* mother's fate overtake you. Her noble captain abandoned her at Dresden, where she stood the chances of starving. But she was glad enough to get back home again.

Gen. Sergeant Meissen, you are of the opinion that I dislike you, and you are right. You are a bold, wicked man, and have dared to profane the spotless name of the man I love, and in speaking of my poor dead mother in such terms, you vilify the dead. If, in a helpless hour she fell, she more than expiated the wrong she inflicted upon me. I knew her goodness and her exemplary life. Knew with what bitter tears she wiped out the stain of her erring sin. At least, she never harmed you. She was too good, to wish evil even to her worst enemy. But it is not enough that your venomous tongue must throw its slander over her and me. Your base ingratitude must also seek to traduce the family of the noble Count Stral-en-heim—your chief and benefactor.

Philip. Ha! Ha! Ha! My benefactor. Will you please have the goodness and kindness to name *any* favor I have ever received at his hands?

Enter MADAM M. L. H. *with tray of fowl, salad and bottle of wine, which she places on the stand.*

Madam M. There, Philip; try and make yourself comfortable, and drop this unpleasant conversation.

Philip. I will Madeline. Thank you, thank you. (*Drinks*) Madeline, I'm proud of you. (*Drinks*). Now, my pretty Gen



evieve, will you please be kind enough to enumerate the bounties I am indebted to the noble Colonel for? I think it would puzzle you.

Madam M. Yes, Philip, that's very true, that's very true—and as much as I respect the Colonel, I think he might have promoted you long ago to the rank of Captain, or Lieutenant at least.

Philip. Madeline, you are right, I have been thirty years in the King's service, and am not I entitled to preferment over many who have already received it?

Gen. That is all very likely, sir; but you must remember that you have only been a few months in his regiment.

Philip. It must, and it shall come.

Madam M. Yes, Philip, and it *will* surely come,—then how proud *I* shall be to have a Captain or a Lieutenant for my brother-in-law. I shall then learn to lean on your arm; and be equal to any of our fine ladies.

(*Business for MADAM M.*)

Philip. Thank you, thank you, Madeline, for your many kind wishes, and for the interest you manifest in my behalf. When I am *great*, you shall not be forgotten.

Madam M. Philip, now, don't say another word about that, you deserve promotion—you are a valient soldier, and would make such a *charming Captain*.

Philip. You may take my word for it Madeline, that before many days and perhaps hours, Count Stral-en heim, will have become my benefactor in good earnest.

Exit MADAM M. R. H.

Gen. I feel assured, sir, that he would readily perform any act of kindness towards you, consistant with his duty.

Philip. Yes, he is the Colonel of the Iron 65th, the Emperor's body guard, a close and intimate friend and adviser; and he has unbounded influence with him. What then is there to prevent my promotion?

Gen. His sense of justice toward other subalterns of longer standing, than yourself, may possibly be the reason of his withholding your advancement.

Philip. Perhaps so, but you will soon see, what *we* can do.

Gen. Whom do you mean by *we*?

Philip. Oh; don't be alarmed, my girl, 'tis quite simple. You know you are engaged to the Colonel's only son, and you will not surely refuse to do a good turn for an old soldier, especially as he happens to be a distant relative.

Gen. (Rising.) I beg of you once for all, sir, to be more reserved in your language toward me. It *is* true that Albert Stralenheim is my affianced lover, and in spite of my low station, his intentions are pure and honorable. Nay, were they not, I would reject them without a pang. In the broad face of day he sought my maiden love. His affection for me, is disinterested and untroubled by one sinful thought, notwithstanding the *distance* that exists between us.

Philip. Ha! ha! ha! That's capital.

Gen. Wherefore that unmeaning laugh, man?

Philip. You girls are all alike. Pretty and vain while youth lasts, when that fades you grow bitter and jealous. You have not the slightest idea what queer pranks Dame Fortune plays on *her* see-saw. Up and down, up and down, and—away you go into the mire.

Gen. It is *you* who are envious and bitter, despicably so to me. But I have *his* promise that before two days have passed he will not only acknowledge me before the world as his affianced wife, but his father will consent to our union.

Philip. I rather think he'll find it hard to obtain his consent.

Gen. Why should he?

Philip. I was mistaken. The haughty family of Count Stralenheim will feel proud and honored to receive the daughter of——, well, no matter who. As sure as *you* are of success, Genevieve, I am even *more so of mine*. I have only to pronounce one word, one little, insignificant word, and the road to my honors, the pathway to fame and fortune, lies clear and open before me.

Gen. Indeed, 'tis very strange you have never uttered this sentiment before.

Philip. I bide my time child, but it is fast approaching—every minute brings my long coveted prize closer and closer to my grasp. Before to-morrow's sunset, I shall wear a Lieutenant's capulettes in the 65th. What say you to that, eh?

(*Enter MADAM M. R. U. E.*)

Gen. If you merit them, and the distinction, I hope you may get them. You have my good wishes.

Philip. If there is nothing preventing your becoming the laughter-in-law of the noble Count; surely there is far less to prevent a soldier of thirty years service, from becoming a Lieutenant.

Gen. Am I to understand, sir; that you meditate making my relationship to you, a stepping stone to your promotion?

Philip. Why, what a memory you have child! Did I not tell you a minute since, that I had to speak but one little word. Ah you don't know what a golden key I carry about me.

(*ALBERT approaches the lattice window and looks in.*)

Gen. Thank heaven he is here.

Philip. Who?

Gen. Albert Straleneheim! Now, sir, speak your boasting words to him, and hear how he will answer them.

Philip. I have no occasion or desire to enter into a controversy with him. So I will not remain longer—for my *presence may interrupt you*. Madeline show me the doorway and I will retreat.

Madam M. Had you not better remain, *you* have nothing to fear from him.

Philip. Fear! I have no fears of him. Whilst the son remains with you, I will seek the father, and we shall see, who will consummate their schemes first, you or I. Adieu! Adieu!

Exit PHILIP and MADAM L. L. E.

Albert. (*Entering door in flat, approaches GEN. VIVIAN and kisses her.*) Can you guess my dear, Genevieve, why I have come to visit you this early?

Gen. I know dear, Albert, that you have some grand scheme in your mind, and before you put it in execution you wish to consult me.

Albert. Yes, darling, you have guessed rightly, and should I succeed, it will open to me a career of independence and usefulness. If I possess the proper talents, the position which the Emperor has almost promised to confer upon me, will give me a general sphere of action.

Gen. Oh, what position can it be, Albert?

Albert. Private Secretary to his highness. I am to have an interview with him this very day. At least, I have solicited one and if he consents, I shall urge him to grant me his long promised appointment forthwith, and then ——

(*Embraces GENEVIEVE.*)

Gen. Yes, Albert, and then ——

Albert. I shall disbelieve ever your fears, dearest, and fulfill my promise to you. Then I shall ask at once my parents blessing on our love.

(*Kisses GENEVIEVE.*)

Nay, nay, fear not, although my father is of noble lineage, he is likewise a man, whose soul is filled with human sympathies. His long career of usefulness has been distinguished by undeviating rectitude, and all who know him, praise him, and esteem him. You would wrong him Genevieve, if for one moment you believe that to me, his only son, he would act unjustly. Believe me, he could not.

Gen. I only fear, Albert, least he should doubt the purity of my affection. Attributing it to a vain, selfish pride. It may seem very weak, very foolish, perchance, but I often wish that you like myself, were poor and humble.

Albert. Were it so, our mutual love could not be greater. Even were I seated on the German throne, I could not feel a pride more honest in raising you to share that lofty station with me. Man, however powerful, need never blush to honor innocence and virtue. Our love is not of to-day, neither will it fade to-morrow. No, no Genevieve, it will bless and brighten a long future. But, dear Genevieve, I must be gone. I heard my father say that the Emperor would review the 65th in person about this hour, I shall watch his departure from the ground and then seek an audience. Farewell dearest, farewell. I feel assured of success, because your prayers will follow me.

Gen. Yes, my inmost heartfelt prayers.

Albert. I will return in the evening, until then good bye darling, good bye.

(*ALBERT kisses her and exits hurriedly through door in flat. GENEVIEVE seats herself at her spinning wheel, and commences singing.*)

SONG.

A year passed by, and again I stood
By that humble cottage door,
The maid had forgotten her early song,
And her heart was light no more.
The big tear stood in her down cast eye,
And sighing I heard her say,
That the gathered rose and the stolen heart,
Could charm but for a day.
And the gathered rose, &c.

Ah, well I knew what had dimmed her eye
And made her cheek so pale,
The maid had forgotten her early song,
And listened to love's sweet tale,



She had drank of the sweets of its poisoned cup,
It had wasted her life away,
And the gathered rose and the stolen heart,
Had charmed but for a day.
And the gathered rose, &c.

(*Enter MADAM M., L. H., who approaches GENEVIEVE.*)

Madam M. My child, you behave very *strangely* of late.

Gen. Do I, mother?

Madam M. Why have you taken such a dislike to Philip?

Gen. Because, mother, I believe him to be a *bad* man. But do not let us talk of him. I have something to tell you that will please you better. I know your anxious love for me. Know how you show it in ten thousand ways. Since I was left an orphan child, to your protection. So come sit by me mother, and share your daughter's happiness, and I will tell you all.

(*MADLINE seats herself in arm chair, and GENEVIEVE drops on stool at her mother's feet. Picture.*)

SCENE II.—*Landscape or garden, in one.*—*Enter PHILIP, L. I. E.*
—*Solus.*

Philip. I have watched his movements, scrutinized his every action and features, and cannot be mistaken. *He must be the man.* This is a strange and eventful world, and what strange, curious pranks does fickle fortune play. To-day we grovel in poverty and wretchedness. To-morrow, we are exalted to position, wealth, and honor, no matter what means or ends we employ; if it only be attained. For years have I waited for this hour to come. I am like the famished tiger that springs upon his long coveted prey, and will not release my grasp, until my hungry cravings are satisfied. How little does his lordship dream, that I possess the dread secret of his life. My silence must be purchased, and at my own price. I will seek an interview with him, and my demands must be recognized. If refused—the world shall know, that empty honor, and titles of nobility when purchased by crime and falsehood, are but bawbles, which the slightest breath, even of the vilest slave, when tainted with the shadow of truthfulness, can scatter to the winds of Heaven.

Exit PHILIP, R. I. E.

MUSIC.

SCENE III. *Street or wood.*—*Troops enter L. E. E., and go through such evolutions as they are best drilled in, closing with parade rest. Music, Hail to the Chief.*

Col. Attention, Battalion! Shoulder, Arms!

(*Emperor and Staff enter, L. E. E.*)

Emperor. Colonel, pass your regiment in review.

Col. Attention, Battalion! Shoulder, Arms! *Ac., Ac.*

Exit L. E. E.

GRAND ALLEGORICAL TABLÉAU,

"THE WATCH ON THE RHINE."

MUSIC—CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE 1.—*Elegant drawing-room in Stralenheim Mansion.—Table chairs, piano, sofa, &c., &c.—LADY GERTRUDE discovered seated on sofa.—Ernestine and Cecelia discovered standing near bay window, c. busily engaged in arranging flowers in vases.*

Lady Gertrude. Yes, indeed, they will shed another halo around my greatness, another branch rising above the proud trunk of my genealogical tree, that even now has grown so mighty that few there are who can presume to look so high. In another month we shall celebrate Ernestine's birthday, and before her twentieth summer dawns upon her, she will be the Countess Stienberg. She will be happy then. The young Count loves her, and that is a sweet omen for her future.

(*Enter COUNT STRALENHEIM in full Colonel's uniform, L. H., who lays aside his chapeau, sword, belt, &c., and falls on sofa as if exhausted—all hasten to him.*)

Lady G. Why Count, what is the matter, how pale you look?

(*Business.*)

Count. Oh, 'tis nothing Gertrude, really nothing. The heat was so oppressive on parade, and it has made me rather faint. There; I'm better now.

Ernestine. (*Taking a bottle from work-box.*) Father, let me sprinkle a few drops of this cologne on your forehead.

Count. No, no my child. It is my heart that requires a purifying essence. But I have joyful news for you Ernestine.

Ernestine. For me, father?

Count. Yes, child, for you. The Emperor informed me to-day, that Count Stienberg's diplomatic mission was ended, and that we might daily expect his return.

Cecelia. But father, do you think he will return heartwhole. Oh, if he should come back faithless.

Lady G. Pshaw, child—stop your jesting. It is joyful news indeed. Ernestine was pining in despair, least the young Count should not return in time to be present at her birthday fete.

(*LADY GERTRUDE, ERNESTINE and CECILIA retire up stage to win dow and exit, R. H.*)

Count. (*Aside.*) Yes, they are happy; who can look upon them and doubt it? Everywhere I breath the atmosphere of ease and brightness. 'Tis only within that I taste the Dead Sea fruit of the bitter past.

(*Enter LADY G., R. H.*)

Lady G. (*Approaching Count.*) Did the Emperor converse long with you to-day, Count?

Count. Yes, Gertrude, he did, and very graciously too. He is an excellent man. Affable to all, and especially so to me.

Lady G. But, Count, you fully merit his esteem and confidence, and throughout your long service you have been most zealous in your duty.

Count. Ah, Gertrude; but few can boast that at every period of their lives they have conscientiously discharged their duty.

Lady G. Count, you are too severe. If we can condemn ourselves for trifling errors, why may not our well merited virtues, equally claim our praise?

Count. Gertrude, say no more. In God's hands alone rests the unerring balance of justice. I am never so happy as when you are seated beside me. In your love and that of our children, I feel the rich blessing of Heaven.

Lady G. Yes, and I can only hope that our darlings future may be as cloudless as our past has been. Ernestine will soon bless with her hand a noble husband, and Cecelia, I am sure will not remain long drooping upon the parent tree.

Count. And don't forget wife, that our noble son will soon be exalted to a position most flattering to a father's heart.

Lady G. But, Count, I feel somewhat surprised that Albert has not ere this received his appointment.

Count. There is nothing to fear with his brilliant talents, he cannot fail of success.

Lady G. Heaven grant it.

Count. There is nothing to prevent it, he has been trained beneath my care. I can answer for him, as for myself.

(*Exit LADY G., L.H. Enter ALBERT, R. H.*)

Count. Why, my boy, you seem annoyed. (Has any one dared.) I mean Albert, what is it that has vexed you?

Albert. Father, I am standing on equivocal ground, as regards the Emperor.

(*Falls into chair.*)

Count. How so, my boy?

Albert. When he left parade this evening, I followed him to the palace. Saw him enter, and when I presented myself for the purpose of obtaining an interview, his chamberlain told me that his highness desired to be alone.

Count. Pshaw! boy you are too impatient. you will receive your appointment in due time—and that will be another laurel to my crown. Fortune, power and dignity, will all belong to me and my son. And then Albert, one wish only will remain ungratified.

Albert. One wish, Father?

Count. Yes: to see you married.

Albert. Married?

Count. Aye, my son, there are many beautiful flowers of noble growth in the courtly circles of Emperor William—some one of them no doubt would suit your taste.

Albert. Father, marriage is not a mere matter of taste. I have been educated to believe that marriage should only follow the deep abiding love of the heart.

Count. My boy, come nearer to me; be seated. It is not this particular lady, not that my wishes, or your mother's point to. But let me suggest some one to you, my boy. What objection can you raise against the beautiful and accomplished Countess Waldenberg?

Albert. I have a fatal one, father.

Count. Indeed! What is it?

Albert. I love another.

Count. Another! Who is she?

Albert. Father, (*Takes the Count's hand,*) listen. I know that you love me, and that you are most just and kind. You also have my welfare at heart, and therefore will not reject the choice I have already made, even though it may not harmonize with your wishes.

Count. Who is the lady?

Albert. A young girl, poor but perfect in every virtue, and with a face and form of exquisite loveliness.

Count. Of noble family?

Albert. No, she is of humble parentage.

Count. (*Rising.*) Then you must at once renounce and forget her. I have no wish that you should marry where you do not love, I will not consent to your union with a low born girl.

Albert. Father, your kindness shines forth, in saying that you have no wish to force me into a heartless marriage; but let me implore you to pause ere you interpose your final decision upon a step that is fraught with weal or woe to me.

Count. My son, you possess ideas relative to the social conditions of life which do not harmonize with mine; but I tell you now, (and receive my words as final, for I am as inexorable as fate upon the point in question,) that unless you marry one whose birth and position are equal to your own, my affection and my home will be forever closed against you. If you are bent on incurring my displeasure, you will wed this girl. Do so, and from that hour I am without a son.

(*COUNT, rising as if to go.*)

Albert. Stay, father.

Count. For what?

Albert. That I may crush out this false pride, that rises like a hideous spectre between us.

Count. (*Indignantly.*) Know your station, sir; you are speaking to Count Stralenheim.

Albert. I know, sir; but I also thought I was speaking to my father. Your pardon, sir. I will not offend again.

(*Enter LEON, L. I. E.*)

Leon. Sergeant Meissen Sends compliments and requests an audience with his Colonel, Count Stralenheim.

(*Business.*)

Count. Tell him Leon, that I will see him presently. (*To Albert.*) Our interview is for the present at an end; but I trust when we meet again, you will have seen your error; if so my silence and pardon are insured.

(*Exit ALBERT, R. I. E., bowing. LEON exits L. I. E.*)

SOLUS.

Count. How strange it is that this man came to enter my regiment. Whenever I meet him I feel myself cower beneath his searching glance. Although his name is unknown to me, yet his features are not altogether unfamiliar. It is the inflexible justice of heaven that has set him on my track, or a mocking

demon that goads me by a false resemblance. Has my life been prolonged but for this? Must the edifices which has taken me years to rear, be crumbled into the dust? Must I be hurled into the dark abyss of despair? Fortune, honor and power, twenty years of a blameless, unstained life, all reft from me? I was so calm, so happy. Why, oh why, am I thus rudely awakened to a recollection of a horrible past? Why this terrible agony at the sight of a man, a subaltern? A man whom I could crush out of existence like a worm. No glimmering recollection even of his name steals across me, and yet, his presence causes my blood to stagnate.

(*Business.*)

Great Heavens! What is this terrible light that flashes through my brain? Ah! I remember now. The heartless monster—have I fallen into his grasp? If so, God help me for he only can,—I am dashing onward to the brink of a yawning precipice. There may be ruin, dishonor and death in the gulf; but I cannot shrink back—dare not recoil. No; this fierce spectre *must* be quelled, or I perish. *Ignobly* perish.

(*COUNT walks floor agitatedly, goes to table and rings bell. Enter LEON, L. I. E.*)

Count. Send Sergeant Meissen to me; tell him I await him.

Leon. Yes, your Highness.

Exit LEON, L. I. E.

(*COUNT stands with back toward door when LEON and MEISSEN enter, L. I. E.*)

Leon. Your Lordship; Sergeant Major Meissen.

(*PHILIP salutes and removes his hat, but remains standing, looking with fixed eyes on the count.*)

Count. (To *LEON*.) Leon you can retire. Should I want you, I will ring for you.

(*LEON exits, L. I. E., bowing.*)

(*Business.*)

Philip. How are you, Colonel?

Count. Sir: who are you, what do you mean?

Philip. Don't be alarmed, Colonel, 'tis only me.

Count. You?

Philip. Yes; look at me, don't you know me? Did you ever hear of, or know a man by the name of Augustus M. Wering?

Who fought side by side as a private soldier, in the old 13th, with him who calls himself Count Stralenheim? Aha! I see you do recollect him.

Count. For mercy's sake, speak lower.

Philip. Why should I? Where is the difference betwixt us? There is none, and you know it. Are you not my old comrade, the sharer of my adventures? Yes, and from this hour henceforth we shall share the same fortune. You've got something worth living for here. Something better than the bare walls of a barrack. Carpets of velvet, and couches of richest silk, mirrors reaching to the ceiling, and ——

Count. For Heaven's sake, not another word; what would you with me?

Philip. Oh, you'll find me a magnanimous friend; my demand will be a very modest one, I can assure you.

Count. Name it then, name it.

Philip. Make my fortune as you have made your own.

Count. My own; you triumph over me because you think you have me in your power.

Philip. You are quite right, comrade. I like to hear truth.

Count. But, sir; you are mistaken; the crime which you seek to build your power upon was not ——

Philip. Committed by *you*, I suppose? Will you put me to the proof, eh? Will you try the potency of the spell that has power to change this splendid home into a dungeon? and cover you with infamy; your wife and children with dishonor? You decline my challenge then? You now know that for the future your safety depends upon my discretion. Your long undisturbed dreams of splendor have lulled you into the belief that you were born to the rank and honors you now hold. Do I speak false in saying that you were once a common soldier in the gallant 13th, the regiment that the true Count Stralenheim commanded? You do not answer! Pshaw, man; lift up your head, I am not a pitiless fool, who have sought you only to give you up to justice — what have I to do with justice? Behave well to me, and I will keep silent, but if not, woe be to you. I have hunted after you for years, and at last destiny set me on your track. It was neither accident nor fate that transferred me to the 65th. I have been exchanged in to nearly every regiment in Germany; always by my own request, and always with the one desire—that of finding you. Success has now come. My suspicions are ripened into certainty, and I await my reward.

Count. Hear me, Meissen.

Philip. I want to hear nothing. Your liberty and perhaps your life depends upon my breath. Fear naught, I can keep a still tongue— *but my silence must be purchased.*

Count. What is it you require?

Philip. Some *gold* to begin with.

(*COUNT gives purse of gold.*)

Count. I have given you all the loose cash I have about me, but name any reasonable sum and I will write an order for it on my banker.

Philip. I will think about it. (*Picks up purse.*) But I need something else besides money.

Count. What is your demand?

Philip. A Lieutenants commission in the 65th.

Count. No, no, you cannot be in earnest.

Philip. I am not, eh! Was your Countship in earnest when he *stole* —

Count. If you are human spare me, spare me.

Philip. Very well, then sir: a Lieutenant's commission in your regiment.

Count. There is no vacancy.

Philip. Then you must *make* one—do you hear me, I say you must *make* one. If I do not receive it to-morrow —

Count. Yes, yes; you shall have it to-morrow.

Philip. Enough. Don't you think you ought to congratulate yourself on having so modest an accomplice? (*Rising to go.*) Adieu—shake hands. Oh, don't be afraid. I cannot very well pollute you.

(*They shake hands.*)

Now summon your lackey, and in my hearing, command him to give me an unquestioned right of entrance here, at any time I may desire.

(*CORST strikes bell and LEON enters, bowing very low.* L. L. L. L.)

Leon. I await your highnesses order.

Count. Leon, admit this officer to my presence, under all circumstances and at any time he may present himself.

Leon. Yes, sir: your Lordship.

(*Bows PHILIP to the door.* L. L. L.)

Philip. Salutes, (*and both exit* L. L. L.)

Count. 'Tis the shadow of retributive—Justice, that closes round me at last. Oh, merciful God—for my wife and childrens sake—stay Thy avenging arm.

(*Drops in chair in tears.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Library in the Emperor's Palace.—Table with papers upon it, book cases, chairs, lounge, etc.—EMPEROR WILLIAM and BISMARCK discovered examining papers.—Inkstand, pen, etc., on table.*

Bismarck. This is a dispatch requesting the immediate promotion of one Sergeant Major Philip Meissen, of the 65th, to the rank of Lieutenant.

(*Hands papers.*)

Emperor. Has a vacancy occurred?

Bis. No, your Highness; I believe not.

Em. Then why this promotion?

Bis. The request is made by the Colonel himself.

Em. Ah; that alters the case. The Count is incapable of making such a demand without cogent reasons. I have full confidence in his judgment. Prepare the commission and I will sign it at once.

(*While EMPEROR is signing paper Servant enters, R. L. E.*)

Homcr. (*Bowing.*) Your highness; the young Count Albert Stralenheim desires an interview with your Highness.

Em. Admit him. (*To Bismarck.*) My Lord, I have reasons for wishing my interview with this young nobleman to be as private as possible. Please retire. anon, I'll send for you.

Bis. As your Highness desires.

BISMARCK gathers up papers and exits, L. L. E.

Em. How the image of that young girl haunts me. I have only seen her twice. Once in the garden of the palace, and the second time, amid the ruins of the temple of Apollo, in company with Albert Stralenheim. And yet, her face and form have left

a fadeless impression upon my memory. An angel's purity seems to dwell in her dimpled smile, and truth and innocence are written in fairest characters on her beautiful brow. Woe befall the man would wrong her; were he one of *my* subjects, he should make the fullest atonement.

(*Enter HOMER, R. I. E., followed by ALBERT.*)

Homer. Your Highness: Count Albert Stralencheim.

Exit HOMER, R. I. E.

(*EMPEROR rises and extends hand.*)

Em. I am happy to receive you. Albert, be seated.

(*Business.*)

Albert. I thank your Highness.

Em. Albert, it is my wish to attach you to my person. The office of private secretary is at your service. Your father has served the State long and faithfully; and whatever honors I can confer upon his son, I will. You have an elevated mind, and a pure heart, and I am *proud* to add that you possess my full confidence and regard.

Albert. (*Rising.*) Your words, your Highness, are most flattering, and the loyal service of my life shall speak my gratitude. A career of usefulness to my sovereign and my country now lies before me. In the unwritten pages of the future, I shall endeavor to inscribe characters of such silvery brightness, that *their* luster may shine on my posterity.

Em. Yes, yes; I presume you will shortly introduce a bride at court. It is not my province to pry into the secrets of the heart, but when the happy hour arrives for you to present your bride to me, I shall expect to find a lady of such peerless beauty that few can rival, and none surpass her.

Albert. And if my first love, my lord, were set upon a maiden whose only dower was her virtue, whose only heritage was her innocence and beauty, and whose rank was no higher than that of a toiling peasant, would your Highness lend *your* aid to crush this desert flower; or would you smile upon the hands that had the honesty and courage to transplant it to a fairer soil?

Em. I will cast aside the sovereign, and be the man. We all owe something to our social position, and ought never wantonly to outrage it; but the happiness of a life, and an unstained purity of confidence, have higher claims upon us. Your secret is partly known to me. I have *seen* the maiden you speak of.

Albert. Seen her, my Lord?

Em. Yes, twice: the second and last time in your company.

Albert. My Lord!

Em. Albert Stralenheim, an Emperor might envy you such a treasure.

Albert. And yet my father despises that treasure.

Em. On account of the young girl's obscure origin. I presume?

Albert. Yes, he quarreled with the simple wisdom of Dame Nature, for not introducing her into *our* scented circles.

Em. You really love her then? Nay, Albert, do not look so reproachfully at me. I wish to serve you, for I feel a strange interest in this young girl. You have pleaded your suit the Count.

Albert. I have, Sire. *(sighs.)*

Em. And he has rejected it?

Albert. Yes.

Em. You can scarcely blame him for that. Both the Count and Countess Stralenheim are descended from the oldest and proudest nobility in Germany, and they may shrink at the *idea* of their only son allying himself to an humble peasant girl. You have sisters too, Albert; do you think they would not keenly feel the scandal of such a connection?

Albert. Scandal!

Em. How impetuous you are. Take my advice and leave love to time. A few months while they serve to ripen your passion may yield you the perfect flower you covet. Meanwhile I will exert *my* influence with the Count in your behalf—rely upon me.

(Shakes hands with ALBERT.)

Albert. Good day, your Highness. *(Bowing.)*

Exit ALBERT, R. L. E.

SCENE II.—*Landscape or garden, in one.*

(Enter ALBERT, R. L. E.)

Albert. Now am I indeed happy—each has full confidence in the other, and can well afford to wait. I have no wish to wound my father's sensitive pride; for he has ever been kind and indulgent to me, and I must obey his wishes. How happy Genevieve will be when I tell her of my prospective success. What a full-toned joy will resound in her voice, as she speaks out the gratitude of her loving heart.

Exit, L. L. E.

SCENE III.—*Interior of MEISSEN Cottage, same as in Act I., in two.*—GENEVIEVE and MADAM M., discovered reading and sewing.—*Music.*—Enter PHILIP through door in flat.

Madam M. Why Captain; you here again?

Philip. Don't call me Captain yet, Madeline.

Madam M. Major, then.

Philip. Only a Lieutenant. Madeline; the Captaincy next Genevieve, who do you think has *won* the race now, you or I?

Gen. I do not understand you, sir.

Philip. So I'm not good enough for you yet. Have a care child, that your pride like others; does not have a fall.

Madam M. You must not notice her Lieutenant, for she's in love, so you must excuse her. Love, you know is like youth, and it comes to us only once.

Philip. What! Nonsense, Madeline. I have been in love over one hundred times. I remember when I was quartered in Metz, I was in love with *seven* girls *all* at once—or they were with me, which is *all* the same.

Madam M. Aye, but you know that you officers are such heart-breakers, Lieutenant. But come, I've such a nice chicken for you, "Captain," and —

Philip. I'm not a captain yet, Madam.

Madam M. I beg your pardon, sir. Oh! Dear, dear what was I thinking about? Oh, I remember—the chicken.

Philip. Never mind the chicken to-day. I dine at the officers mess now.

Madam M. A glass of wine then Captain?

Philip. Lieutenant, if you please.

(*Stamping his foot indignantly.*)

Madam M. Oh, dear me! you brought my heart into my mouth.

MADAM *exits*, L. H.

Philip. I hope you like the flavor of it. (*To GENEVIEVE.*) My promotion does not seem to create much of an *impression* upon you.

Gen. What impression should it make, sir?

Philip. Yes, Genevieve. I have found the lock at last to fit my golden key. I have only given it one turn, and out drops my Lieutenants commission. I shall turn it again in a week, and out will drop my Captaincy —and then how the upstart pride of the noble Count will —

Gen. The Count?

Philip. Aye, the man you hope to call your father, some of these days. He's a great man, Genevieve—the Count—rich, titled, powerful, and has the ear of the Emperor. What a round of lofty steps he has climbed—one kick of the foot, and down he comes groveling in the mire.

Gen. Count Stralenheim *deserves* the honors he has won, they fit him with becoming grace.

Philip. Of course, he was *born* to them—they take to him naturally—well, your lover will be his heir, and if the Count would only give his consent to your marriage, what superb prospect you would have. Shall I intercede for you? he will hardly refuse me.

Gen. (*Rising proudly.*) No, No, Lieutenant Meissen; if one trivial movement of your lips would break down the only barrier that prevents my marrying with Albert Stralenheim, I would choose to walk through long years of loveless life, rather than that you should make it. Pursue your own tortuous ways for your own worthless ends; I can stand alone without *your* aid.

MUSIC.

(*Grasping her roughly.*)

Philip. You defy me then, do you? You know not the power I hold over him you love; that with one whisper I could make him cringe before me like a whipped cur. Shall I breath it, Eh?

Gen. Mother! Mother!

(*Enter MADAM M., L. H.*)

Madam M. Why, Captain; you will hurt the child—let go of her.

(*Business.*)

Philip. Yes, I can bend the pride of the father and son, as easily as I now bend the joints of these soft arms; and then you will have something to love me for—won't you, little one?

(*Business.*)

Gen. Let go or you'll break my wrist.

Philip. I'll break your heart and give you something to hate me for in earnest.

(*GENEVIEVE cries.*)

Gen. Mother, Mother! Save me from this inhuman wretch.

Philip. Aye, you will yet have cause to call me an inhuman wretch, when I have sunk the whole brood of them lower than the dust.

MUSIC.

(GENEVIEVE *shrinks*. PHILIP *struggles roughly with her, as if to kiss her*.—ALBERT *enters door in flat and knocks PHILIP down*.)

Madam M. Mercy on me, he has killed the Captain.

PICTURE.

Albert. Who is this fellow, Genevieve; and what business has he here?

Philip. (*Rising*.) I will answer that, sir; I'm an officer in the Emperor's body guard, and curse me if you do not repent this.

Albert. I was not aware there was an *officer* in my father's regiment, who would so far forget himself as to offer insult to an unprotected girl; and I regret to see that uniform disgraced on your person. Look on this poor frightened girl, clinging to me in fear and trembling.

Philip. Farewell, Albert Stralenheim. The *Colonel's* son—some day you will regret this insult.

Exit PHILIP, R. I. E.

SCENE IV.—*Wood or landscape, in one.*

(*Enter LEON very stiffly and slowly, R. I. E., with umbrella under his arm, and large official documents in his hand.*

Leon. (*Slowly*.) “*Non comitibus cu swampo up stumpo comitibus grabus, sic semper tyrannus—et saleratibus*”—which being interpreted, means—*nothing at all*. What wonderful faith must my master repose in me, to entrust in my care, these important official documents relating to the vast sale of decomposed vegetation that has accumulated by atomic augmentation, without the least fear of my misappropriation or of confiscation. But years of attention and mental circumnavigation, have given him full confidence in my ability to contract a negotiation in this vast speculation.

(*Looks off L. H.*)

Ah; hither cometh the quaint valetudinarian. I will salute him, and ascertain whither he goeth, and upon what mission he per-ambulateth?

(*Enter HOMER, L. I. E., slowly, dignifiedly and pompously with umbrella and papers, same as LEON.*)

(*Business.*)

Leon. (*Bowing very low*.) Good morrow, most respected *Homeribus*. If it be not too inquisitive, may I enquire whither thou goeth?

Homer. Most certainly my emaciated and elongated friend. I am the bearer of very important dispatches to the chief butler, and the master of the hound lodge of his Royal Highness, and have no time to loose while on my important mission. But tell me my friend, wert thou ever in love?

Leon. Love! Do not mention it. For three months did I court a pretty maiden, and more than ten thalers did I disburse upon her in that time. She had three other lovers at the same time—a tapster, a tinker and an ostler. I promised to cudgel the three of them if she would only say the word, but she would not. Was that not proof enough that I loved. No man knows the heart pangs I have suffered. Yes, she went and jilted me. Excuse these tears, they will flow—alas! alas! my heart is broken—I cannot live much longer—I will wear a weed around my hat for the balance of my days.

Homer. Do not give way, my friend. I have suffered. O, false, false Cathrina. But my friend, keep up a good heart, be a man—look at me and be a man—be a brave man.

Leon. Thou art not brave.

Homer. Man doth not walk this earth braver than I am. But in the words of the poet, “he that fights and runs away, will live to fight another day.”—Shakespeare.

(*Business.*)

Leon. Stay. more I look at thee, more I gaze into those deep blue dreamy eyes, more I scan that manly form, more am I tempted to think thou art—stay, hath thou a mole, the mark of a cabbage under thy left wrist?

Homer. I have.

Leon. Then thou art my long lost brother.

(*Embrace. Business.*)

Homer. Is it indeed my brother? Yes, as like as one pea is to another; two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one.

Leon. And if I love too wildly, who would not love thee like Leon.

Homer. Come brother, come, let's wander, and find some nice *cafe*, where with pipe and foaming glass we can while the time away.

(*Business.*)

Exit L. 1. E.

SCENE V.—*Parlor, same as in Act II. Scene I. with some alteration in setting, conforming to depth of stage. —COUNT and COUNTESS STRALENDAM discovered seated. Enter LEON, L. I. E., bowing very low.*

Leon. Your Highness, Lieutenant Meissen, of the 65th, desires an interview with the Count alone.

Count. I will not see him. Why should my privacy be thus disturbed? I will not see him!

(*LEON moves toward the door.*)

Lady G. No, No; Count, that answer will not do—that message will sound too harsh. Tell him you are engaged.

Count. I have it now. Leon, when I strike the bell you may admit him, and not before.

Leon. Yes, your Highness.

Exit LEON, L. I. E.

Lady G. This man seems to hold some strange and terrible influence over you; the very sound of his name inspires you with fear. Why does he visit you so frequently? Since his first visit your temper, once so calm and placid, has given way to angry gusts of passion. The doom of midnight seems to have crept into your heart. Tell me, tell me, I implore you? What dark mystery lies hidden there?

Count. Believe me, Gertrude, 'tis nothing; nothing only some urgent business connected with the regiment. I have been instrumental in this man's promotion, and he believes that he best evinces his gratitude, by an over zealous display of military duty—join our children in the arbor for a few moments, Gertrude; he will not detain me long. Anon; I'll come to you.

Exit COUNTESS, L. H.

(*COUNT strikes the bell.*)

(*LEON enters with PHILIP, L. I. E., and bowing low.*)

Leon. Lieutenant Meissen.

LEON exits, L. I. E.

(*Business.*)

Count. Can I not have one single moment in the society of those I love, without your interruption? What new torture has your brain invented for me now?

Philip. Colonel, you are very bitter with your old comrade. I have been so kind to you. Another man might have denounced you, dragged you to a public trial, and ——

Count. I know your power, man, too well: state your demand, rob me of my last coin, but leave me the precious memory of an honorable career.

Philip. Rob you, Colonel! Oh, no; I never took to the thief's trade yet. My conscience is too dainty for that. A pity perhaps, because if I had done so, I might have been ennobled too; who knows.

Count. Do not tempt me beyond endurance.

Philip. You are always so passionate, Colonel—do try and keep cool.

Count. Come, sir: to the point, what is it you require.

Philip. Promotion!

Count. Promotion! you have had it.

Philip. I must have a higher grade. I insist upon your procuring me a captain's commission.

Count. It is utterly impossible. I have not the power.

Philip. Impossible! Nothing is impossible with the potent Count Stralenheim, the friend and confidante of the Emperor. Tell him I saved your life, and you owe me an everlasting debt of gratitude which you can never repay. The story will be all the better for having a mixture of truth in it.

Count. If you have one grain of human feeling in your heart—do not goad me to madness.

Philip. I've not come here to listen sir, to your cant; I want a captain's commission.

Count. Heaven help me! Heaven help me!

Philip. You will see the Emperor personally to-morrow, and when you leave his Highness, you will carry my captain's commission in your pocket. Do you hear?

Count. I—I—will do my best.

Philip. Of course; I knew you would. You need not fume and rage, and fret; we have have only to understand each other and we shall get on admirably.

Count. May I now be released from this interview?

Philip. Presently. Your eldest daughter's birthday, I believe, is at hand. She is a superb creature.

Count. Silence, villain! Pollute not the innocence of my child by your breath.

Philip. Your eldest daughter's birthday is to be celebrated by a *fete*. Cards of invitation have already been issued; with one exception every officer of your regiment has been invited. If Captain Meissen's name is not included in the list, that distinguished officer may resent the indignity.

Count. An oversight, nothing more, of the Countess; it shall be rectified.

Philip. Yes, I presume so. Your estimable lady has for some cause or other, taken a great dislike to me, and has frequently hinted her contempt for me, in a most conspicuous manner. But I am not vindictive, as you already know. This trivial omission will of course be corrected.

Count. I will see to it myself.

Philip. Thank you, Colonel. You ought to feel proud in having your old comrade amongst the gaping crowd of flatterers.

Count. If your brain can invent no fresh demand upon my fear, spare me at least the further torture of your presence.

(Philip places his hands upon the Count's shoulders.)

Philip. I'm not the man, Colonel, to forsake a brave comrade. Count Stralenheim and Captain Meissen will stand or fall together. Good bye—old boy—good bye. Remember your promise—a captain's commission.

PICTURE.

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Grand parlor with center arch doorway in STRALENHEIM Mansion.—Flowers and fountains.—Paintings, etc., adorning the walls.—Ladies and gentlemen elegantly attired. Officers in full uniform.—PHILIP discovered sitting alone in the foreground on sofa, R. H.—Music as curtain rises.*

Count. (*Entering R. L. E., approaching PHILIP.*) I trust you are enjoying yourself Captain?

Philip. Yes, very much indeed.

Count. Can I do anything for you, Captain?

Philip. Yes, remain here, and listen to me. You have purposefully avoided me to night, and a majority of your guests have followed your example. Now, stay here beside me where every eye in the room can see us.

Count. Pray speak lower; do not at least seek to humiliate me in the presence of my own children.

Philip. I shall speak as loud as I choose. I have been humiliated, and it is now I turn the tables. Now understand me, you are rich; I must be rich too. You are noble, and by all the saints in the calendar, I will be noble too.

Count. Noble?

Philip. That's the word, sir! Noble. I'll show these proud fools, that I can hold my head as high as any of them.

Count. For heaven's sake speak lower, or find some other time to specify your wishes.

Philip. Yes, a patent of nobility gained by your influence.

Count. Make your demand to morrow, when I can reason with you upon its folly.

Philip. Why to morrow? Are you ashamed to be seen speaking with me? My demand is made now. No prevarication—your answer?

Count. Upon what ground can I base such a request to the Emperor?

Philip. I leave that to your own discretion. You may grovel, and pray, and whimper, or you may sell half of these estates to purchase it; but the patent of nobility *must be issued and in my hands*. That will be one step more towards the achievement of another desire.

Count. Another desire?

Philip. Yes. I intend to marry.

Count. Be it so, you cannot require any advancement from me in a step of that nature?

Philip. Sir, you are mistaken there, the lady I have selected belongs to *your* family.

Count. To my family?

Philip. Yes, the chosen one of my heart, is Ernestine Stralenheim—your lovely daughter.

(*Business.*)

You do well to pause—you would doubtless strike me, if you thought the blow would silence me.

Count. Wretch! you do not mean that.

Philip. Sir, listen to me. I have been crowed over and jeered at to day, until my blood has been heated into a passion, and I am dangerous.

Count. Oh, God! This is the consequence of —

Philip. Your crime—*you* never shrink from the crime itself, but you now shrink from detection. You saw no dishonor in the deed when you perpetrated it—that lies in the inevitable discovery unless —

Count. (*Wildly.*) What? You told me something,—but it flashed like lightning through my brain, and scorched my memory—let me reflect.

Philip. I want to marry your daughter.

Count. Ah! those fearful words again. You cannot be in earnest, this is only a heartless jest. If you have one glimmer of a father's love in your heart, you would know how sharply I feel the stab. I will forgive you this time, but thrust at me in future through any other form, save through the affections of those who are more precious to me than life, wealth, or —

Philip. Honor? .

Count. Yes, even honor. That young life is full of promise, radiant with hope, and I hold it at higher value than all else on earth. Ask for any sacrifice that does not touch my sinless wife, my pure and spotless children, and I will make it to preserve

their peace—not mine—for while you live and carry the fatal secret on your tongue, the haunted criminal is less wretched than am I.

Philip. Your fine words will not turn me from my purpose; I am not yet penitent. I have told you the final sum at which my silence can be purchased.

Count. Oh, God! If you have a heart, be-think you: she has been reared in the lap of luxury, her young form has grown from infancy under the fostering care of her noble mother. The affianced lover of her virgin heart now stands beside her, hopeful for the morrow that is about to dawn upon their blissful union. Even if I consented, could you lead a joyous, loveless, not bride, but a victim to the altar?

Philip. I have already told you that is the final sum, at which my silence can be bought.

Count. I'll talk to rock—to ice—no longer.

Philip. Your answer; come.

Count. What? give my dove into your vulturous claws? No, never! Never!

Philip. Beware, sir; be heedful of your speech, my noble Count, or those strains of music will be harsh with discord presently—once for all—will you—or will you not—give me your daughter in marriage?

Count. Never; no never!

Philip. One word and it will be as irrevocable as eternal justice. If you do not instantly present me to your guests as your future son-in-law.

Count. What?

(Breaking away from PHILIP.)

Philip. I will publicly denounce you.

Count. *(Grandly.)* Wretch! Monster! I loathe, despise and defy you. Do your worst!

(Business.)

(Music ceases, and guests gather around the Count and PHILIP.)

Philip. Hold! hold! Those titles would better become you than that of Count —

(Business.)

MUSIC.

Count. Captain Wallenstein, I order you to place Captain Meissen in arrest.

Wallenstein. Your sword, Captain!

Philip. Hear me, one moment gentlemen, one moment.

Count. Heed him not, heed him not—bear him away, I *command* you.

Philip. Here is my sword, sir; take it, (*hands it to WALLENSTEIN,*) and with it listen to me. This man who stands here as the Colonel of the 65th, has no right to that distinction. *He is an imposter.* The title of Count Stralenheim which he bears, is no more his than mine. Years ago this flattered, courted, fool, was my comrade in arms, we were both private soldiers in the same regiment, the 13th battalion to which the true Count Stralenheim belonged—whose wealth he stole—whose title he assumed—and whose life he took with his own murderous hand. Deny these acquisitions if you dare!

(*Business.*)

(*Consternation, ALBERT grasps his father's hand, and the COUNTESS GERTRUDE faints.*)

Albert. Count Stralenheim will answer this vile calumny, sir, with the voice of truth and innocence.

(*Business.*)

Count. Captain Wallenstein, obey my orders—remove your prisoner. My son, I thank you for your courage, look to your mother and your sisters. Ladies and gentlemen, I will answer to this caluminous charge, to my sovereign.

PICTURE.

CURTAIN.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The library in Count STRALENHEIM'S mansion.—COUNT STRALENHEIM discovered.—Books and papers lying upon the table, stool, etc.—Knock at the door, R. I. E.*

Count. Who's there? I thought I had locked the door.

(Enter ERNESTINE, who kneels at her father's feet.)

Ernestine, child is it you?

(Business.)

Ernest. Father! *(In tears.)*

Count. Yes, yes; I am your father, Ernestine, your shame stricken father.

Ernest. Oh, father, that cruel man, said you were—oh, I cannot speak the word.

Count. A murderer! Look in my eyes, my child, and tell me if you think that name belongs to me? Say whether you believe, this hand that now touches your innocent cheek has ever been stained by human blood?

(Business.)

Ernest. No, no dear father, I do not believe it. I never will.

Count. (Aside.) Oh, the trustingness of youth; even when the laws of vengeance is wreaked upon me, the affection of this pure heart will follow me with blessings. My child, have the guests departed?

Ernest. Yes, father, all.

Count. And Count Steinberg?

Ernest. He remained after all had gone, praying to see me, but we must be strangers to each other now, until this vile slander is cleared from our name.

Count. But Ernestine, if circumstances have linked a chain

of suspicious evidence against me—a chain so strong that all my assertions are powerless to break it, must your pure heart be robbed of its hope, your life of its summer, because ——

Oh, God! Oh, God!

(*Business.*)

(*Enter OFFICER and file of three men, L. I. E., with papers.*)

Officer. Count Stralenheim, I hold a warrant from the Emperor for your instant arrest; also a further order, placing under strictest surveillance, your family and servants. No one must enter or leave this house without my written consent. A carriage is waiting without to convey you to the Emperor's palace. You will prepare to go immediately.

(*Business.*)

Ernest. (*Clinging to him.*) Father, father may I not go with you?

Count. No, no, my child, from this moment you must gather a woman's strength in your heart. This is but the first taste of the bitter cup that we are so soon to drink to the very dregs. Good bye my child, good bye, and may God bless you.

(*Business.*)

(*Kisses ERNESTINE fervently.*)

Ernest. Father! Father! Father!

MUSIC.

(*Business.*)

(*Officer supports ERNESTINE, who falls fainting to the floor. LADY GERTRUDE and CECILIA enter R. and L. H. Officers takes hold of the COUNT as if dragging him away. LADY G., clings to the COUNT and CECILIA kneels.*)

PICTURE.

CURTAIN.

ACT VI.

SCENE I.—*Library in the EMPEROR'S Palace, elegantly furnished*
—*The EMPEROR discovered seated examining papers.*

Page. (*Entering L. L. E.*) Your Highness, a young girl craves an audience with the Emperor.

Em. A young girl, is she alone?

Page. No, your Highness; she is accompanied by an aged lady.

Em. What is the nature of her business?

Page. She reserves that for your ear alone, your Highness.

Em. Her name?

Page. She gave only one name, Genevieve.

Em. Genevieve! That name is unknown to me—nevertheless, admit her.

(*Exit PAGE L. L. E., and enter with GENEVIEVE and MADAM M., L. L. E.*)

Page. (*Bowing.*) The ladies of whom I spoke, your Highness
(*Business.*)

Em. You may retire, gentlemen.

(*Exit PAGE and BISMARCK, L. L. E.*)

Be seated, ladies.

Genevieve. My Leige, I have ventured to intrude upon your patience, on behalf of a family, lately happy, but now alas! plunged in deepest despair; trusting——

Em. I know lady, of whom you speak—Count Stralenheim, is it not?

Gen. It is, your Highness.

Em. Are you aware lady, that the Count is charged with a most terrible crime?

Gen. Yes, your Highness; and I also know that his accuser is a cruel, wicked man, to whom truth and honor are words without meaning.

Em. Granting all of this, lady, still I can see no palliation for the Count's guilt, in his accusers wickedness.

Gen. If he be guilty, the greater the reason that his innocent wife and children should find pity and compassion. They are at least blameless. Oh, your Highness, you are great and powerful; be generous too, "and temper justice with mercy."

Em. The law must take its course, lady. The Count has dug the abyss of shame with his own hands. Answer me, Lady, are you not the maiden to whom the young Count Albert Stralenheim, has given his love.

Gen. I am, your Highness.

Em. Are you aware, lady, that that young man's prospects are now ruined forever? You will of course forget him.

Gen. Forget him, your Highness—yes, in death. When Albert Stralenheim sought my love, he believed himself to be rich and noble, he knew that I was poor and low born; still, he was content to take me to the altar, to lift me to his station; and shall I now, when misery over-shadows him, meanly forsake him? No, your Highness, he may need my strength—a feeble woman's strength—to sustain him, and it shall not be withheld. But I come not to speak of myself; I am here to plead for the unhappy. You are the Sovereign and judge of these States; cannot your Highness vouchsafe to the Count a private examination?

Em. To what end?

Gen. To spare him if innocent, the indignity of a public trial. My heart tells me he is guiltless of this crime. I believe him to be the victim of some crafty plot, formed by this worthless Meissen's cunning brain. You do not know that man's baseness, your Highness. The venom of the serpent, and the cowardice of the wolf lurks in his nature.

(GENEVIEVE returns up the stage.)

Em. Yes, yes; my desire to do justice has weakened my power to render mercy. This girl is right; Stralenheim cannot be guilty until he is proved so. I may without trampling on the laws of equity, quell this scandal at once, if Meissen's accusation should turn out to be false. Your prayer is granted, lady. I will give the Count a private examination, as you have requested. Not only the culprit, but his family, his accuser and yourself shall be present to witness the proceedings. May the Supreme

Judge of all enable him to prove his innocence. It will be a happy triumph, fair one, for more hearts than one.

(Strikes the bell. Enter PAGE and bows very low, L. I. E.)

Page. Your Highness, I await your orders.

Em. Inform Count Bismarck I desire to see him immediately.

Page. Yes, your Highness.

Page. *(Entering with BISMARCK, R. I. E.)* Your Highness, Count Bismarck.

(BISMARCK bows.)

Em. Count, issue the necessary orders for the appearance of Count Stralenheim and family, also for the attendance of Captain Meissen, forthwith.

(EMPEROR takes seat.)

Bismarck. Yes, Sire.

Writes and sends PAGE off with letter, L. I. V.

(Enter OFFICER with guard conducting COUNT STRALENHEIM as prisoner, L. I. E.)

Officer. My Lord, Count Stralenheim.

Em. Be seated, sir. Now summons his accuser, Captain Meissen.

(Guard exit and return with CAPTAIN MEISSEN, L. I. E.)

Officer. Your Highness, Captain Meissen.

(Business.)

Em. *(To BISMARCK.)* Are we ready to proceed?

Bismarck. We are, my Lord.

Em. *(Rising.)* Count Stralenheim, arise.

(The COUNT rises.)

I cannot dismiss from my memory, the many loyal services you have rendered to your Sovereign and your country; but before I deliver you into the hands of legal justice, I wish to give you the benefit of a private examination. Tell me then, are you guilty of the fearful crime laid to your charge, or are you the victim of a vile imposter?

Count. *I am Guilty!*

(Business.)

(COUNTESS GERTRUDE faints and falls on sofa. ERNESTINE and CECILIA grasp each other, and ALBERT supports his mother. Consternation. Omen, Guilty!)

Count. I am guilty, your Highness—but not of the crime of murder.

(*Business. Dumb Show.*)

Standing in your august presence watched over by sorrowful ages that have never seen the shadow of falsehood on my lips, I now reveal the actual truth. I was once, as my accuser has stated, a private soldier in the 13th Hussar's, and my real name is Carl Rhonge. Count Captain Stralenheim was the commanding officer of my company; he was my patron and my friend. Our regiment was ordered to join the army which was then marching upon Russia. This man, Meissen, *deserted* on the march, and from that time until he joined the 65th, I have never seen him. On our route, the Count was seized with a malignant fever, and at his request, I was permitted to remain behind to attend him. The disease proved fatal and he died. Here, your Highness, is a copy of the priest's certificate of his death; they both took place at Carcow, in Poland.

(*EMPEROR and BISMARCK examine papers carefully.*)

Em. Yes, they are undoubtedly authentic; go on, sir; go on.

Count. I received from his dying lips his last injunction. He was the last surviving branch of the ancient house of Stralenheim. Not one of his own blood remained to inherit his vast estates. There was a young girl of humble birth, to whom he had become devotedly attached. He had wooed her in secret, in secret he had married her; but for some unhappy quarrel which subsequently arose between them, he discarded and deserted her; and no one can attest more truly than myself, the bitter penance of his soul in his dying hours, for his passionate sin. To my charge he committed the title deeds of his estates, and the entire control of the fortune he died possessed of. But, not for my benefit was the trust made; but for his discarded wife, whom he had left at Dresden in penury.

Em. And you usurped his title, appropriated his fortune, and betrayed the trust imposed in you?

Count. Pardon me, your Highness. I returned at once to Germany, and journeyed to Dresden. There I made the most searching inquiry for his widow. My conscience bears me witness that I spared neither expense nor time in my endeavors to find her. After a tedious and fruitless search, the only tidings I could learn were, that a female answering her description had some months previously quitted Dresden, and gone, no one knew whither. Then, but not till then, did temptation seize upon me

to assume the Count's title, and falsify my own name for his. Nature favored the deceit. In height, person and features, we bore a great resemblance to each other. No one in Germany, save myself, knew of his death. He had no relations, no heirs. I believed that I was entailing no injury on the living, and I resolved that my future career should bring no reproach upon the dead. I procured a Captain's commission and joined the Prussian army, and fought under its banners until the capitulation (of Paris) brought peace to my country. Years have passed since that black spot in my calendar, but not one day has been dishonored by an unworthy act. My past career is too well known to your Highness for me to dwell upon; but despite the distinguishing marks that adorn it, I have been unable to expiate the crime which Heaven has thought right to reveal.

Em. (*To PHILIP.*) Can you, sir; disprove this statement.

Philip. I always believed, your Highness, the Count to have been murdered.

Em. Then why did you not seek out the assassin and bring him to justice?—you need not answer me that, sir—I now see plainly the cause of your rapid rise. That man has been your victim—your tool. You remained silent, to serve your own vile ends, using your powers to extort honors which are reserved for brave men only, not for perjurers and deserters.

(*EMPEROR touches a bell, and PAGE enters R. H.*)

Send in a guard.

(*Guard enters R. I. E.*)

Strip the epanlets from that man's shoulders, and let his sword be broken in front of his command, and do not allow him to disgrace that uniform. See also that his name is erased from the army rolls—convey him forthwith to the dungeon of the fortress, and there confine him during our royal pleasure.

(*Guard exits with PHILIP, R. I. E.*)

(*To COUNT S.*) And you, sir; I sentence to dishonorable dismissal from the service, and exile for life; and unless the true heirs of Count Stralenheim can be found, the State setteth its solemn seal of confiscation upon your lands and wealth.

(*Business.*)

(*LADY GERTUDE rushes to the COUNT and throws her arms around his neck, his family gather around him.*)

Lady G. Karl! Karl! you are still noble in my esteem. You have been a loving shield to me in the past, and I will be your peaceful refuge in the threatening future.

Gen. (Kneeling at the EMPEROR's feet.) Your Highness, hear me, hear me, I entreat you.

Em. Not to plead for him—justice wavers not.

Gen. I plead for justice only; nothing beyond, nothing beneath it—a strange thought creeps through my brain.

Em. What is it girl?

Gen. (To the COURT.) What was the maiden name of the young wife that the real Count deserted?

Count. 'Twas "Adelaide Grayson."

Gen. Adelaide Grayson! That was *my* mother's name; my poor unhappy mother! (*Cries.*)

Omens. Your mother!

Madam M. Yes, your Highness, she was *my* sister, and Genevieve is her orphan child.

Em. Madam, can you prove this?

Madam M. Most fully, your Highness. Genevieve was born in Dresden three months after the Captain deserted my sister.

Em. And what was your sister's subsequent fate?

Madam M. She left Dresden and returned to our native village, where after the lapse of a few years she died, and Genevieve became *my* adopted child.

Em. Did you ever hear her say that she was married to Captain Stralenheim?

Madam M. She often said so, but few believed her.

Em. (To the COURT.) Have you, sir, any proof that a marriage was ever contracted between Count Stralenheim and Adelaide Grayson?

Count. I have your Highness, and here is the certificate.—(*Hands paper.*)

Em. (Examining paper.) I see this is perfectly genuine.

Count. There are some half-obliterated words; your Highness upon the back of it which please read. They were written by Count Stralenheim on the morning of his death.

Em. (Reading aloud.) "Should there be any living issue of the union, which this document legally certifies, let my last sacred wish be respected, and my wealth and title descend to it."—It shall be respected.

(*Business.*)

(*Takes GENEVIEVE by the hand.*) Genevieve, Countess Stralenheim, your Sovereign salutes you. (*Kisses her hand.*)

Madam M. What, Genevieve a Countess?

(*Business.*)

(*Aside.*) This then explains my dream. All night long I saw her climbing steps.

Gen. And now by virtue of your sentence, my liege, and my father's will, ths wealth is placed at my disposal?.

Em. It is Countess!

Gen. Then one-half of the estate I relinquish in favor of Colonel Karl Rhonge, your Highness: he won that distinction by brave and honorable services. Oh, your Highness, revoke your decree of banishment, and let him still retain it.

Em. And the other half?

Gen. I beg your Highness, to transfer the remainder to him who was willing to bestow an honorable title upon me when I had only a poor but virtuous name, to give in exchange, to his son, Albert Rhonge, I give, with the hand he so long coveted, all that I possess.

(*Business.*)

Count. (*Aside.*) And this is the maiden whom my worthless friend, so haughtily despised?

Em. Genevieve, you are a noble woman, and may Heaven bless you, with a just reward. Colonel Rhonge, I have no alternative but to follow the noble example of your son's bride. I revoke my decree of banishment. Serve me in the future as faithfully as in the past, and all will be forgotten and forgiven.

(*Colonel kneels.*)

Count. God bless your Highness, for this generosity!
(*Tears.*)

Em. Rise Colonel. Let your gratitude and atonement exemplify itself in deeds of virtue. (*To Albert.*) Albert, the post I offered you, is still vacant, and awaits your acceptance.

Albert. May I prove myself worthy of it, your Highness.

(*Business.*)

Em. My children—(*Join their hands*)—If ever you are tempted to stray from the paths of rectitude, may the warning voice of Genevieve, Countess of Straleneheim, call you back to duty and to honor.

PICTURE: "THE EMPEROR'S BLESSING".

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